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Annual Address

TO

LAFAYETTE POST No. 140

Department of New York, G. A. R.

BY

COMMANDER ALLAN C. BAKEWELL

1900





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By transfer  
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## ANNUAL ADDRESS

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Comrades:—Of all the duties of my life I have never found any more beneficial than to review the past. If in looking over the records of a year, we may find satisfaction, we are stimulated thereby for better deeds and nobler purposes even, than those we approve; and, should we find barren spots in the field, green perhaps with verdure from the seed we have sown, we are inclined to improve in the future where we have been remiss in the past.

The past year has been one, to me, rich with many blessings; perfumed with the closest association of Comrades whom I have learned to call my friends, and glorified with the superior loyalty of those who honored me with the command.

No one can ever know the reluctance with which I accepted the nomination for office realizing, as I did, the prominent position where my predecessors had placed the Post, and its magnificent history to be maintained; but this feeling is now greatly changed, for no Commander can fail when relying upon the support of the noble men of this Post who stand on guard to supply all deficiencies and to carry out any project which may be proposed.

With such a wonderful past for an example and so firm a foundation to rest upon there is so much to guide and so sure an anchorage to harbor in, it would be a poor mariner indeed who could not sail safely

over the well chart-ed lanes of travel or ride securely at anchor should storms prevail.

It is with no sense of self-adulation that I point out the deeds of the year—fruitful as they have been—but with a feeling of pride that so much has been accomplished. It has been your work more than mine.

During the year we have added fifteen to our Roster-roll—eleven by muster and four by transfer, and we have lost thirty-seven—twelve by death, seven by honorable discharge, nine by transfer and nine dropped—a net loss in membership of twenty-two.

The last report of the Quartermaster shows a net gain in the General Fund of \$405.81, and in the Relief Fund of \$190.65, reflecting much credit on the management of the Quartermaster's Department.

The following chronicle of the events of the year will recall many pleasant incidents and place before you the labor and results of a term full of interest and activity.

January 5.—Public Installation of Officers by Commander in Chief Albert D. Shaw. This was an occasion of great enjoyment. The guests were more numerous than ever, among whom were many in private life, yet notable withal, who were deeply impressed with the services of the G. A. R., and enlightened with its purposes. Department Commander Kay and Staff were also present and added their praises of the Post and all it had performed. The music was superlatively good and assisted greatly in the enjoyment of the dance wherein the Daughters and their friends took evident delight.

January 11.—Death of Junior Vice Commander

Banks. This came like a shock from an unseen hand. It cast a cloud of sorrow about us that seemed too dark to penetrate, too mysterious to understand. He had been a true Comrade for so many years and an efficient officer. It seemed as if a blow had been given from which we could not recover.

January 19.—A flag was authorized to be sent to Comrade Corbet, Jet, Oklahoma, for a school in his neighborhood, which should be the counterpart of the one sent to him for a similar purpose in January 1899.

January 26.—A silk flag mounted on a staff, with two smaller salutation flags, were presented to School No. 165, at 109th Street and Amsterdam Avenue. Several Comrades were present at the presentation which was formally made by Comrade Homer with eloquent words. The exercises by the children were patriotic, unique and interesting.

February 2.—Commander in Chief Shaw and Department Commander Kay were present at the Post Encampment by special invitation to muster in the recruit of the occasion. The obligation was bestowed by your Commander; the charge delivered by the Commander in Chief and the badge presented by the Department Commander.

A letter was read from Mrs. Mohr, Past Department President of the Woman's Relief Corps, with thanks for a donation in aid of her benevolent work among army nurses.

Reports were made of the public presentation by the Post of large and handsome flags to public schools Nos. 90 and 169.

February 16.—A letter was received from the Su-

perintendent of the Alfred Corning Clark Neighborhood House commending the labor of Comrade Robert A. Morrison in drilling the DeWitt Cadets connected with the institution. These cadets have since become thoroughly organized through the efforts of our Comrade and have been loaned a sum of money to purchase uniforms which they have partly returned.

An altar flag and ten dollars in cash was sent to Comrade Lancey, of Maitland, Florida, to revive a dying Post. This was provided by three comrades of this Post, and was the only flag carried in the parade of the Department of Florida on the occasion of its Annual Encampment.

A large bunting flag was voted for the Industrial School No. 34, Willet Street, which was afterwards formally presented for the Post by Comrade Henry P. Butler, and addresses were made by Officer of the Guard Trenor and Comrade Serrell. It was enthusiastically received by the little children of foreign parentage with salutation and song.

Another flag, the third, was authorized to be sent to Oklahoma on request of Comrade Corbet.

Comrade Homer reported the shipment of one hundred and sixty 4x6 bunting flags and one hundred and sixty salutation flags to the schools of Hawaii. They were sent with an address from the Post and with copies of Salute Exercises.

March 2.—The Post authorized the Committee on Military Instruction and Flag Presentation to Schools to organize within the Post a Flag Association, which

has been done and rules governing the same established. This has not met with the success hoped for by your Commander in point of membership yet much has been accomplished. There are about forty annual members with annual dues of \$3.00 each and several Comrades have become life members by payment of \$50. Several hundred dollars have been obtained by one member of the association from patriotic friends—all of which has been spent in the purchase of hundreds of flags as this report will bear witness. Your Commander feels confident that the Association will become enlarged as the results become known and he recommends it to the careful consideration of all the comrades of the Post.

The placing of a Tablet at the tomb of Lafayette in Picpus Cemetery, France, was authorized and it has been procured at a cost of \$90.00, and will soon be in position to be a lasting memorial of the patriotism of this Post whose works are not confined by any boundary but the circumference of the earth, to teach wonderful lessons to the world that the true American is a lover of liberty and proves his loyalty to that boon for humanity by setting up its memorials of esteem which an hundred years cannot shroud with forgetfulness.

March 16.—The Post By-laws were amended making the Muster and Transfer fees for admission to this Post \$25. The effect of this amendment has no doubt limited admissions to the Post and to a large degree is accountable for the small number of recruits for the year. It was deemed wise to make this change for numerous reasons, the prominent one being to encourage comrades of the order to remain with the Posts

where they have been identified and are needed rather than to be encouraged to leave them for admission to this. The day has arrived when few members may be expected except by transfer but it has not arrived when Posts should be abandoned to their discomfort for affiliation with others still strong enough for their own maintenance. The muster and transfer fees now received under the amended by-law are payable to the Relief Fund which needs to be supported and strengthened against the day, not far distant, I fear, when its resources will be limited and its accumulations in greater demand.

Junior-Vice Commander Everts was elected at this time by unanimous choice to fill the place made vacant by the sudden departure of our remembered and revered Comrade Banks. In Comrade Everts I have had a strong supporter and wise counsellor, thus proving your good judgement in making so wise a selection.

March 27.—In addition to two hundred 4x6 bunting flags previously sent to the schools of the Philippine Islands five hundred 4x6 bunting flags were placed on the Transport Sumner for conveyance to Manila to be distributed among the native officials and prominent citizens of those islands to encourage loyalty to our country and allegiance to our government. This was not hastily nor inconsiderately done. An appeal had come from the loyal soldiers who are in the service of humanity in the far away possessions where the guiding hand of Providence has led the Nation. After consultation in person

with the Secretary of War and the Adjutant General, I became convinced of the need of immediate action and relying upon your support to me and loyalty to the flag I promised the gift and telegraphed to your Flag Committee the promise, also ordering the flags by wire to be ready for first conveyance. Immediately on my return I called the committee together to make my report and was astonished to find that *one* Comrade (who modestly forbids the use of his name), had secured the funds and I was received with an approval of my course and a check in hand to meet the cost. That I was touched by this action of the Comrade and the Committee mildly expresses what I felt. It rounded up a gift of nearly 1,500 hunting flags to our new possessions without the cost of a dollar to the Post fund. It sanctified our profession of Loyalty; it proved our support of a government we had defended and preserved, and it placed the purposes of the Grand Army of the Republic upon a pedestal to be observed, even by those who hitherto have failed to see. This gift to the Philippines was warmly commended in an autograph letter by Comrade McKinley, a *fac simile* of which has been sent to you all.

April 20.—The Post contributed \$10.00 toward the expense of decorating, on Memorial Day, the graves of Comrades in Southern Departments.

On this date an entertainment was given to the Comrades and their families. There were about three hundred present. The programme was considerably rendered by Comrades of the Post augmented by volunteer talent of rare excellence and some other additions. A light refreshment was distributed and



another enjoyable occasion was recorded which helps to brighten our days as our shadows lengthen towards the evening time.

May 4.—Senior-Vice Commander Brackett reported securing a home in an asylum for the little daughter of our deceased Comrade Thorndike. This was not easily accomplished, yet accomplished, and the Post may be grateful not only to Comrade Brackett, who devoted much energy and time, but to Mrs. Brackett as well, who brought her womanly powers of persuasion to bear and her sweet influence beside which secured the desired result, and this was not the only instance. In this connection I would like to say just a word or two, that my Comrades may know it is not only our own business ways, and committee action and grand work, that does so much good, it is to the wives and daughters of many of our Comrades of the Post we are indebted for much that has brought us distinction and praise. Though we have no organized Woman's Relief Corps as established by that name, we have an auxiliary that holds its silent musings at our home firesides and more than I can describe or even know, helps us in deeds of charity that has been blessed by Him who commended the gift of a cup of cold water in His name.

May 16-17.—The Post delegation to the Department Encampment was present at Utica. A number of the delegates from this Post, by invitation of the Grand Marshal, was mounted and headed the procession which paraded the streets.

At this Encampment the Post was honored by the election of myself as Delegate and of Comrade

Blanchard as Alternate to the National Encampment. This action gave the Post a representation of three in that body. Comrade C. S. Palmer being a Past Department Commander.

May 18.—A large bunting flag was formally presented to The Sheltering Arms, at 504 West 139th St., in the afternoon.

Two flags were sent to the High Schools of Comanche and Dublin, Texas, and were presented by the Department Commander of that State with much ceremony. Confederates and their families were present and participated. It certainly established a united feeling of regard for the emblem which means protection to all at home and has its influence for lofty purposes against personal ambition abroad.

A flag was also sent to the Dorchester Academy, at McIntosh, Georgia, and two of them sent to the Soldiers and Sailors Home at Washington, D. C. The former has been gratefully acknowledged and the latter were given in memory of our departed Comrade Wetherill whose widow is connected with the Home.

May 27.—Memorial Sunday. By invitation of the Pastor and Trustees of the New York Presbyterian Church, corner of 128th Street and Seventh Avenue, the Post attended divine service in the evening at eight o'clock. Comrade Duncan J. McMillan, the pastor, paid a glowing tribute in his address of welcome and in his sermon too, to the accomplishments of Lafayette Post. The church was beautifully decorated and the service interesting and instructive. Your Commander was gratified that so many comrades, both uniformed and otherwise, were present to sustain the

reputation of the Post in its constant endeavor to support the purposes of the Grand Army of the Republic in all its exercises. Notwithstanding the increased distance for so many of our Comrades there seemed to be the usual goodly number present.

May 30.—The Annual Memorial Day of the Grand Army. The duty of the Memorial Committee of placing over the graves of our departed Comrades a fresh flag in token of their loyalty to country and our loyalty to their memory was religiously performed. The Statue of Lafayette in Union Square Park was decorated with flowers and at the tomb in Picpus Cemetery, France, a wreath was provided and placed there by request, by Comrade Ambassador Porter with words of praise for the Post, whose duty is performed without hindrance by distance. The Daughters of the Post in sympathy with our worship and regard furnished a beautiful wreath to mingle with the flowers we placed on the statue here a mute but eloquent testimony of gratitude for the long ago service of the patriot who helped our fathers make us free. It was a beautiful day as if specially provided to give approval of the other special feature the Post had admirably arranged to perform. At 9 A. M. the comrades of the Post with their families and friends numbering about 600 in all embarked on a Starin boat and sailed up the noble Hudson with banners afloat and music attendant to disembark at West Point, and place in Cullum Memorial Hall a bronze tablet to give tribute of worthy praise to our esteemed Comrade Doubleday, who had learned on that historic ground the great lessons which have made so many leaders in strife and have known

"no such word as fail." Accompanying the Post was the widow of our departed Comrade who knows no words but praise for the tribute bestowed. The exercises of installation were ritualistic and impressive. The litany, the music, the addresses, and the reading of the famous Gettysburg Address of the martyred President were features of the programme which will not soon be forgotten, and the lessons taught thereby have made an impression which must redound to the credit of the Order for which we stand. The tablet had been procured within the limit of the appropriation made, including a *fac simile* for the widow's home. The return by boat was a progression of enjoyment, the finish of which closed a day of rare experience without a single incident of misfortune but full of satisfaction and pleasure seldom if ever surpassed. The Committee in charge of all the details have my warmest praise and earned the approbation of every Comrade of the Post.

June 1.—In response to request from an officer of the Woman's Relief Corps' Home at Oxford, New York, there had been contributed by Comrades of the Post a generous collection of books and magazines for the library and reading room of the Home—several hundred in all. This gift was suitably acknowledged and reported at an encampment of the Post on this date. It was a bountiful response to the call from the last abiding place of the tottering soldier and his faithful spouse, as well as of the never to be forgotten unselfish nurses who followed in the army's wake to heal the sick, succor the wounded and restore to service the invalid boys in blue who so sadly

needed woman's care, and it was another evidence of the sublime mission of the Grand Army to be noble in purpose and pure in sentiment.

At the Encampment of this date the Post had the pleasure of receiving an informal visit from the Count Sahune de Lafayette, a direct descendant and grandson of the Marquise, for whom this Post was named. He has expressed himself grateful for his reception which was without ceremony or preparation, but cordial and sincere.

July 6.—Another evidence of the indefatigable and loyal performance of duty by Senior-Vice Commander Brackett was brought to notice at this Encampment through his report that he had found a home for two more of the children of our late Comrade Thordike. Again Mrs. Brackett showed her womanhood and patriotism in procuring a special ruling which permitted the children's entrance into the home.

A flag was sent to St. James Church, Augustinian Fathers; Carthage, New York, which was duly received and gratefully acknowledged. An illustration that the Post has but one creed, the Golden Rule, and knows no party or race.

August 26-30.—Not the least successful performance of the year was the attendance of 54 Comrades at Chicago on the occasion of the National Encampment. Had your Commander realized at the inception of the proposition to properly represent the Post in a body at so great a distance from home, what it would involve in labor and sacrifice, he would have discouraged the effort. However, it was a pronounced success—consummated through the untiring energy of the Committee, the sacrifice of time by

many Comrades and the liberality of others. Lafayette Post is not properly constituted to make so long and expensive a journey. Those who have the time and money to spare are at the season of the year when National Encampments are held scattered all over the face of the globe. They cannot go and they are difficult to reach. Yet on this occasion the money was provided by loyal and liberal Comrades and men of sufficient number were in the ranks. This urgent request of the Commander in Chief to be present was cheerfully met and the Post scored another victory for itself and carried away the palm. We had the right of line of the entire marching column on foot and made a creditable appearance in a procession that occupied five hours to pass a given point. Too much cannot be said of the completeness of every detail of the arrangements. Transportation was secured that was comfortable and exclusive and accommodation was provided that was ample and agreeable. There was nothing to mar the enjoyment but everything to enhance the value of Comradship.

September 27.—Dinner to General and Comrade Elwell S. Otis. It has been expressed by conservative and experienced men that no better affair of this character has ever occurred in the city of New York, and nothing has ever caused me more misgiving in the preparation than did this. Men of note had informed me that a dinner of this character could not be arranged in the heat of summer, and words of discouragement and ominous shaking of heads met me at every turn, while the Committee in charge were pursuing their course to gather the grand result. With a leaden heart and trembling nerves I watched

the labor and counted up the daily current reports while I shuddered almost in contemplation of the defeat that seemed inevitable. It seemed as if the series of successes of years, the Napoleonic marches of the Post since its birth was to meet its Waterloo under my administration. Nothing could be done to avert the seeming disaster, but to proceed. The hand had been placed upon the plough and we could not look back. Again I had underestimated my Comrades of the Post. The dinner was an occasion that no words can fully portray its success. The guests who were speakers were noted for their conspicuous and lofty position in life. The army and navy, regular and volunteer, the Church, the college, were represented by the highest in the rank of their profession, and the sentiments expressed were national and loyal, conceived by cultured thought and uttered by eloquent tongues. The Grand Army of the Republic chieftain and the Confederate general sat together as the lion and lamb of millennium allegory and exchanged sentiments of brotherhood and loyalty of which neither could be ashamed. It was a great feast, and no one can measure its influence. The lessons of the year, even of the century, were thrown with words, like pictures on canvass, which revealed the nation's growth, its worldly influence, and its possible attainments. It had a national value and its benefits cannot be foretold. To those who brought forth the surpassing grand success of this occasion out of the darkness of doubt and discouragement to make it shine with all the glory of brightest light I owe more than I can repay. To have failed would have darkened my future life, while now



I am still wearing the uniform of the Post instead of the sackcloth and ashes assigned by some of my personal friends.

October 20.—In response to an appeal by the Commander in Chief one hundred dollars was telegraphed to the Assistant Quartermaster General of the Department of Texas for the relief of suffering Comrades through the Galveston tornado. Returns have not yet been furnished so your Commander is unable to tell whether this sum was a suitable proportion of the total contribution by the order.

November 2.—At this Encampment the subject of delinquency in payment of dues had earnest consideration, resulting in the suspension of fourteen Comrades and the reproof of others in arrears. This matter of delinquency had assumed abnormal proportions of several years growth, and it seemed to me that the limit of indulgence had been nearly reached. Weighing the subject for weeks, and consulting formally and informally with conservative and liberal Comrades of the Post; listening to able and complete reports from the Delinquency Committee I became convinced that in some cases the Post was imposed upon, in others the rules imposed a burden upon deserving Comrades in forbidding their retirement without paying sums they were unable to pay, and that a few should have an extension of time. To relieve those who desired to unload the burden they were powerless to do I assumed the responsibility of promising them discharges on application and a remission of accumulated dues. This was accepted by five Comrades whose discharges have been granted and dues aggregating \$106 remitted. Several owing

smaller sums who hoped to pay were granted further time, and some have paid on account while many have liquidated in full. It was a delicate subject to treat in the face of two of the corner stones of the Order—Fraternity and Charity. But I could not conscientiously do my duty to you who have placed so responsibly in my charge almost the sole decision in these cases as they are presented by the Delinquency Committee. Pride sometimes has detrimental influence upon sensitive men, and they need to be guided out of an irksome dilemma, and there is in every organization some who become indifferent to pride, to say nothing of honor. The dues of the Post are light indeed compared with the value they purchase, and your Commander believes that there are few within our charmed circle who cannot with forethought and determination and by systematic proceeding meet the cost which is kept so low. It may require sacrifice of some habit, perhaps of some necessity, but I would belittle the Order if I did not affirm that the value obtained is worth the sacrifice. The slate has been nearly cleaned. We start upon the new year with an inconsiderable arrearage, and this is the result of what has been done by persuasion and some force withal. If I have erred it has been an error of judgment and I am willing to leave to your considerate and fraternal regard the infliction of whatever punishment I deserve.

November 16.—Again we have received the Commander in Chief and Department Commander. It has been known to your Commander that there were some members of the Post, and even among those who cheerfully contribute to the expense, who believe

these officers, high in the National and Department body, should be received by the Memorial Committee which represents all the Posts of the County of New York rather than by one Post who must limit the attendance, while the committee can arrange for the presence of the entire order in the district it commands. Lafayette Post has annually given these receptions since 1886, and after fourteen years may with credit to itself turn over the honor to the Memorial Committee. This would have been done the present year if the Memorial Committee had prepared itself to accept the commission. It had not, and so the condition was forced upon your Commander at Chicago to either invite the Chief or suddenly abandon a function which by adoption for so many years had grown, almost, to be a prescribed rule of the Order. To have omitted this abruptly might have caused uncomfortable conclusions by the two officers whose rank had been so signally recognized by the Post for a decade and a half. The reception was as usual a success, and if we have closed these autumnal feasts forever, we closed them with triumph and can point to our record without regret.

December 7.—Election of Officers. Of this there is but little to say, but that little is impressive. That you re-elected the entire field leaves the Commander no position of singular honor, but he can proudly take his place with his staff, and accept the distinction of your approval by your unanimous choice for the second term. There is no emolument so great as to receive the approval of a year's service in office by the selection for another term.

December 15.—The Post paraded to be present at

the laying of the Corner Stone of the Soldier's and Sailor's Monument, 89th Street and Riverside Drive, in the afternoon. With the prospect of inclement weather your Commander considered it his duty to issue a cautionary command with the order for assembly. This doubtless caused the number participating to be small but the number present compared favorably with other Posts who were there and there could be no charge of indifference to the honor offered by the Grand Marshal whose escort the Post formed a part.

In the evening, at the Murray Hill Hotel, the Twentieth Birthday of the Post was celebrated with a feast. It was a feast indeed. It was arranged with so little formality and at so low a price many Comrades no doubt, and with reason, were not impressed that it was intended to be a function of importance. There were about 60 Comrades present and only a guest or two. It was a family affair. The price was small but the spread was large, and this, because Comrade Jaques, the boniface, was behind the screen. For bounty of provision and abundance of wit and wisdom the dinner was a revelation. There has been no affair of the Post, since I have come within it, when fraternity has been more real, enjoyment superior or satisfaction more complete. I recommend an annual recurrence.

December 18.—A flag, 9x12, of bunting was presented for the second time to the Pascal Institute, 576 Lexington Avenue, in the evening. The formal presentation was made by Comrade Henry P. Butler, who was present with several of the Post Comrades

who loyally represented us on this important occasion.

December 21.—Inspection and Memorial Service. The Annual Inspection was made by Assistant Inspector Comrade Charles E. Sprague, who was received with honors and discharged his duty with commendable spirit. A special honor of the evening was the appearance of the Department Inspector who came, he said, because he wished to show his personal appreciation of a Post who stood so high in the Order and was a monument of strength and beauty illustrating the purposes and principles for which the Order stands. The Memorial Service was impressive and grand. Wholly within ourselves we assembled to do honor to the memory of the departed for the year. We had no hired mourners to sound our lamentations or pronounce our eulogies, just a family meeting to pay just tribute to our dead. I cannot express my feelings as I sat with you in commemorative attitude to say farewell again to those who have journeyed in advance to assemble on the other shore. It seemed to me as though there was a spirit presence of our departed Comrades who communed with us and bade us pursue our course with increased fellowship and more tender regard. As the records were made, and the beautiful words of the chosen speaker were spoken, and the hymnal choir sang, I could not but feel assured that every member present would mentally resolve to be a warmer friend and a truer Comrade, if such could be, than he had ever been before. And so the term has closed in weaving garlands of affection over the twelve new-made graves of the year.

In closing my report, I must express my warmest thanks to one and all. Without my efficient staff it would have been a different record I would have had to report. If I had not had your sublime support, Comrades, I would have sat in idleness with folded arms and little would have been wrought. You gave me good counsel, you stood close by my side, and now you have given me your confidence by choosing me for your figure head for another year. It was not my wish to succeed myself. To be a worthy Commander of Lafayette Post one must give much of his time and all of his talents. He must have no thought of his personal comfort and have no personal ambition. His purpose must be to serve his Comrades as he would serve his Country or his God. All that he has must be consecrated to the welfare of the men who by their integrity and loyalty became kindred in the bonds of brotherhood that has no successful rival aside from the Church. To have declined this second honor, greater than the first, with all that it forgives and by its forgiveness bestows, would have been unworthy of the trust you have imposed and careless of the affection you so beautifully endow. So then with, the past for our guide, let us march boldly into the future and meet the affairs that come into our paths, believing in each other, that the Post may continue to fulfill the mission which Omnipotence has marked out for it to perform.

ALLAN C. BAKEWELL,  
Commander.









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BOOKBINDING  
Grantville, Pa.  
March-April 1988  
We're Quaint About

